Research, solutions and inspiration, delivered.

The Bulletin

Discover new ways to advance equitable wealth building and economic mobility.

December 9, 2025

Joe blog - pull-out quote

A lot needs to change in America—and recent years have tested our collective efforts to advance economic justice.

Households are navigating mounting pressures, and the systems meant to support broad prosperity are strained. Still, even in this environment, practical change efforts in communities across the country are showing that better outcomes are possible. **These early shifts matter because they point to what a more secure and inclusive economy can look like.**

Read Joe's December blog here.

AFN In the News

Inside Philanthropy

Inside Philanthropy Spotlights AFN's Leadership in Asset Building

David Callahan's Inside Philanthropy Top Story drew national attention to asset building — and recognized AFN's critical role in strengthening this field.

With renewed national attention on early wealth building, philanthropy needs clear, actionable guidance more than ever. AFN is committed to helping funders make sense of emerging tools and align their investments with equity and long-term impact, including through our new Baby Bonds brief and regularly updated fact sheet comparing 529s, CSAs, Baby Bonds, and 530A (Trump) accounts.

AFN *Short Takes* - Insights and Perspectives from Recent AFN Programming

Savings, Wealth & Opportunity Summit in Arkansas

In a new *Short Take*, AFN member **Rebecca Pittillo of the Blue & You Foundation** recaps Arkansas AFN's Savings, Wealth & Opportunity Summit held on November 5.

Cross-sector leaders from education, finance, philanthropy, and state agencies explored how early savings tools, community partnerships, and tech-enabled supports can strengthen family financial security. The insights offer funders across issue areas clear opportunities to align strategies and advance long-term wealth building.

Upcoming Events

NATIONAL WEBINAR* *Beyond the Floodlines: Part 2 of the Three-Part Series on Funding Asset Preservation
December 10, 2025 | 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm ET | REGISTER
After disasters, intentional investment is key to keeping wealth rooted locally and ensuring long-term recovery. In this second installment of our three-part series, we'll explore how philanthropy and financial institutions can help small businesses navigate disruption, rebound faster, and build lasting community resilience. *The third and final session, focused on housing, will take place on January 29, 2026.*

NATIONAL WEBINAR* *Funder-Only Briefing: 530A (Trump) Accounts and Early Wealth Building
January 30, 2026 | 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm ET | REGISTER
Join AFN on January 30 for a funder-only briefing demystifying 530A accounts and what they mean for early childhood savings and equitable wealth building. Sponsored by the **Annie E. Casey Foundation** and presented in partnership with Economic Opportunity Funders and the Tax Equity Funders Network, this session will clarify how 530A accounts compare to tools like Baby Bonds and 529s, what questions remain, and what funders need to know ahead of rollout.

AFN UPCOMING EVENTS | RECORDED WEBINARS

Member News and Announcements

- Michael and Susan Dell, and AFN member the **Michael & Susan Dell Foundation**, announced a bold $6.25 billion donation to fund 25 million children's savings accounts—providing $250 for each child starting next year, alongside the rollout of the new 530A (Trump) accounts.
- **The Rockefeller Foundation** is supporting Maryland's launch of an AI-driven partnership aimed at reducing poverty, helping renters move toward homeownership, and improving access to essential services like nutrition and financial support.
- An investment from the **W.K. Kellogg Foundation** helped Santo Domingo Pueblo secure $22.1 million to bring fiber to every home, marking a major step toward closing long-standing gaps in connectivity. The Pueblo trained Tribal members in 3D printing, built solar-powered infrastructure, and launched Santo Domingo ISP, delivering affordable high-speed internet to 700 households.
- A new KIDS COUNT® report from the **Annie E. Casey Foundation** shows that more than 1.1 million older teens—7% nationwide—are neither working nor in school. As attention shifts toward "opportunity youth," AFN is underscoring the role funders can play in expanding the financial tools, supports, and systems that help young people build stability and wealth.

Insights and Opportunities From the Field

- A major milestone for the field: Cook County, Illinois, has become the first government body in the nation to make guaranteed income permanent. With the Board of Commissioners approving $7.5 million in ongoing funding through its FY2026 budget, the county is setting a powerful precedent for what's possible in communities across the country.
- Two recent pieces — in *The New York Times* and *Inside Philanthropy* — highlight the growing urgency around heirs' property and its far-reaching impact on wealth, housing, community stability, and climate resilience. AFN is building a growing body of resources to help funders, practitioners, and policymakers understand the scope of the issue, identify levers for change, and invest in effective solutions.
- The Social Security Administration has withdrawn a proposed rule that would have significantly limited access to Social Security Disability Insurance, avoiding what experts estimated could have been major reductions in eligibility and impacts on SSI recipients. The decision marks an important development for funders tracking policy shifts that affect economic security for people with disabilities.
- Starting in 2026, Workforce Pell Grants will allow students to use federal aid for high-quality, short-term training programs. Final federal rules and state decisions will shape which programs qualify, and new reporting requirements will demand stronger data systems to track outcomes. The change could expand access to training and new career pathways for learners who previously faced financial barriers.

Careers at AFN

AFN Welcomes New Memphis Program Officer

Asset Funders Network is excited to share that Katy Leopard joined AFN on December 9 as our new Memphis Program Officer, bringing strong experience in cross-sector partnerships, funder engagement, and systems-change strategy. Katy will lead regional efforts to support equitable asset building and wealth creation across Memphis.

AFN is Hiring: Join Our Growing Team!

Asset Funders Network is looking for committed, talented individuals who want to make a meaningful contribution to achieving economic justice. Explore our job openings below and share with your networks!

- Carolinas Program Officer
- Communications Manager

AFN extends our heartfelt thanks to **Racheal Meiers** of Kaiser Permanente and **Lora York** of Chicago Foundation for Women, two dedicated Board members whose terms recently concluded.

Throughout their service in a variety of leadership roles, Racheal and Lora brought invaluable insight, thoughtful guidance, and a deep commitment to advancing equitable wealth-building strategies. Their contributions have strengthened AFN's work and left a lasting impact on our network and the field.

We are deeply grateful for their time, expertise, and unwavering support of AFN's mission.

ENGAGE. INVEST. ACT.
OCT 6-8
Philadelphia, PA
2026

Save the Date
for AFN's national conference, October 6-8, 2026, in Philadelphia, PA!

Missed an Issue?

Catch up on past stories in our newsletter archive.

AFN NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

The conversation doesn't stop here. Join us on LinkedIn for real-time ideas, conversations, and voices shaping the future of equitable wealth building—**follow AFN!**

ASSET FUNDERS NETWORK
Grantmakers Advancing Economic Equity

The Asset Funders Network engages philanthropy to advance equitable wealth building and economic mobility.

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